
Day 1

Read: Ruth 2.19-20; 3.1-18

Study: In 2.20, Naomi literally calls Boaz, “a kinsman redeemer” [as in NIV; rendered “one of our closest relatives” in NASB, “one of our family redeemers” in NLT, “one of our next kinsman” in KJV]. This is the same language Boaz uses to refer to himself in 3.12. Look up Leviticus 25.25, which uses the same terminology. What is the duty of a kinsman redeemer? Does it have anything to do with what Naomi and Ruth are trying to accomplish? Look up Deuteronomy 25.5-10. Is this more to the point about what Naomi and Ruth are trying to accomplish? Do you think Boaz should be bound by this passage of the covenant? If so, whom should he marry? Recall Naomi’s advice in Ruth 1.8-15: was that in accord with the spirit of this covenantal law?

Reflect: Think about Jesus’ attitude toward the Pharisees, who diligently tried to keep the letter of the Law, but failed to understand the spirit of it. Contrast that with Boaz’ approach to the Law [as studied above]: that it exemplified God’s character which was to be emulated even when a situation was not specifically mentioned in the Law. How do you approach scriptural teaching for your life? Are you one who looks to apply the principles of God in every aspect of life, or are you one who looks for legal loopholes to get away with what you can? In what areas of life might you better exhibit the spirit of God’s teachings?

Pray: Ask God to reveal to you any ways in which you are using worldly wisdom to deal with issues or to accomplish goals, instead of using his revealed wisdom.

Day 2

Read: Ruth 3.1-18 [again].

Study: In 3.1-4, Naomi comes up with a plan to provide offspring [the same concern she had in 1.8-15]. Note that in 3.3, what Naomi is advising is that Ruth take off her mourning clothes and put on her regular clothes, and in Hebrew there is sexual suggestion in the phrases “uncover his feet” and “lie down.” What do you think of Naomi’s suggested method? She makes it sound like she is seeking a covenant answer by considering Boaz’ relationship to her dead husband [brother; notice what Ruth calls Boaz in 3.9], but does her proposal to Ruth suggest a godly approach to the problem or a human one? Does Ruth carry out the plan as Naomi intended, or does she change it in some way to reflect her own character? [Hint: contrast how Naomi pictures it happening and how Ruth carries it out; contrast Naomi’s intention with Ruth’s approach.]

Reflect: What do you think of Boaz’ verbal response to Ruth’s proposal? Why does he find her decision to seek him out praiseworthy? [Hint: it is not because he is flattered!] How can the righteous Boaz marry a woman from Moab? What do you think of the way Boaz acted in response to Ruth’s presence? Consider his words and actions thus far, and Naomi’s assessment of him in 3.18 [remembering that this is the time of the Judges]; what does this indicate about Boaz’ integrity?

Pray: Ask God to purify you and help you become a person of Christ-like integrity.

Day 3

Read: Read Ruth 4.1-12

Study: Read Genesis 2.24. Though it says the man *leaves* his family to be joined to the woman, the reality was that – while the man and woman did start their own family to produce children [multiply] – they remained attached to the man’s family in terms of lineage and inheritance [especially once the Mosaic Law was in place to provide rules for inheritance of the promised land]. Because the man and woman become “one flesh,” she now has the same rights to inheritance as her husband: thus Naomi now owns the land Elimelech owned, and Ruth has a right to inherit from Naomi, just as Mahlon would have if he were still alive. Preserving the lineage was important to the Israelites [4.5], This explains why Boaz says his brother must take Ruth along with the land.

Reflect: Remember that long discussion in Ruth 1.8-18? Naomi saw as restrictive the parts of God’s covenant which dealt with how widows were to marry within the husband’s family, but Ruth apparently saw it as a solution. Naomi is self-centered and thinks God is a tough God, whereas Ruth believes God will provide the answer. Interestingly, this

conversation [1.8-18] seems to have occurred on the same road that Moses was on when he spoke Deuteronomy to the people! Think back on how you assessed Ruth's actions during last week's devotions. Ruth not only wanted to go to Israel, she made a vow to stay with Naomi, possibly because she understood the implications of her marriage and that her marriage vow was inviolable to God. Do you keep your commitments that sincerely? Do you understand God's Word that well? One further implication of this marriage concept is that, as the "bride of Christ," we of the church have no inheritance from God except through Christ, the Son!

Pray: Ask God to help you honor your commitments, especially in the areas that derive from direct application of his Word. Confess any times you have failed in this.

Day 4

Read: Read Ruth 4.13-22

Study: Note the terseness of the author in describing the wedding and honeymoon period: 4.13 alone. The author is not telling a romantic story at all; this point is included only because it describes the resolution to the tension of not having "seed" or offspring that permeates the story. Notice this "seed" is the very line that will lead to King David [and thus in the legal sense to Jesus]! If you look up Jesus' lineage in Matthew 1:1-16, you will see three women mentioned. That they are mentioned at all [when the others were not, in a male-lineage society] points to their significance, and yet all three were foreigners! Note too who Rahab was in relation to one of our characters! For future study, you might read the stories of Tamar and Rahab and look for similarities with Ruth.

Reflect: Naomi and Ruth tried to resolve their food problem through gleaning and their seed problem through Ruth's marriage to Boaz. Did God bless their resolutions? We saw earlier that God blessed their use of a covenant solution to the food problem by providing them with an abundance of food through the gleaning of Boaz' fields, and that Boaz' generosity also led to even greater blessings of food as well as of protection. Now, as they apply the covenant answer to the seed problem, how does God react to this woman who was married to Mahlon for ten *barren* years? See 4.13. And this answer by God to these two who would use the Covenant to bless Naomi is Obed, the seed who would lead to David, the greatest Old Testament Covenant Blessor, and ultimately to Jesus, the ultimate Covenant Blessor. What does this imply to you about the need to understand God's covenants for today? What do you think you should do to put yourself in the same position as Ruth, of being able to discern God's answers to your problems by using his Word?

Pray: Ask God to help you make changes to your approach to life, such that you know his Word intimately and are able to use it practically.

Day 5

Study: Narrative Structure: Remember how the book began? It was the days of the Judges. David is the answer to the problems of the time of the judges: he was the king after God's own heart, who would unite the country and lead it toward God. God would raise up a good prophet and judge named Samuel, who would anoint David as the king. [King Saul was merely a lesson God was teaching the people for demanding a king *like* the other nations had.]

Literary Context: God promised in Genesis 3.15 that Eve would have a "seed" that would redeem mankind and the earth from the curse and from Satan's rule. In Genesis 12.1-3, God chose Abraham's line to be the line of that seed, a promise reiterated to Isaac and Jacob. Jacob and Tamar had Perez, who had Hezron and so on, leading to Boaz, Obed, Jesse, and David. From the line of David, we know, would come Jesus the Messiah, as God also prophetically promised. Thus, the book of Ruth ties together the "ultimate seed" path of Jesus from Abraham to David!

Reflect: Why didn't God kill Naomi for trying to send the girls back to their own gods? Because she had already "returned" = repented to Israel and God's provision. In fact, God blessed Naomi from that point on: Generous! especially since Naomi probably never got intimate with God. One big message in this narrative is about redemption. God wrote into his Law for the nation that they should reflect his character by redeeming a widow without a son and redeeming the land of a poor family member. God the Father later would send his Son, Jesus to redeem the lost, by paying with his blood to free us from our captivity to sin, death, evil, and even the Law itself. How can experience living free of sin and evil? How can you reflect Christ with regard to redemption?

Pray: Ask God to help you share the good news of redemption with those who do not know Christ.